



Manager's Guide to Building Connection

This guide provides simple, high-impact actions to help managers strengthen trust, belonging, and authentic relationships at work. Aligned with the U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being, it turns connection into a daily practice.

Essential: Connection & Community

Connection grows when people feel seen, supported, and safe to be themselves. This guide focuses on practical, high-impact actions that managers can take to build authentic relationships and foster a sense of belonging in the workplace.

Trust

Building psychological safety through consistent, respectful interactions

Belonging

Creating an environment where every team member feels valued and included

Authenticity

Fostering genuine relationships where people can be themselves

Start small, stay consistent, and model the connection you want to see.

1 ■■ Practice Active Listening

Why it matters:

Listening deeply shows respect and builds psychological safety.

Try this:

- Begin check-ins with: "What's been energizing you lately?"
- During difficult conversations, pause and reflect back: "What I'm hearing is..."



Reflection:

How often do I listen without interrupting or preparing my response?

2 ■■■ Model Vulnerability & Authenticity

Why it matters: When leaders show realness, teams feel safe doing the same.

Try this:

- Share a personal learning moment or challenge.
- Ask: "What support would help you right now?"

Action Step:

One way I'll show authenticity this week:

3 ■■■ Create Regular Connection Rituals

Why it matters: Micro-moments of connection compound over time.



Start meetings with one-word emotional check-ins.



Celebrate "small wins" weekly.



Pair team members for quick gratitude swaps.



Team Plan:

New ritual I'll introduce:

4 ■ ■ Recognize & Include Every Voice

Why it matters:

Inclusion fuels engagement and innovation.

Try this:

- Rotate meeting facilitation or idea-sharing.
- Invite quieter voices by saying: "We haven't heard from you yet—what do you think?"

Action Step:

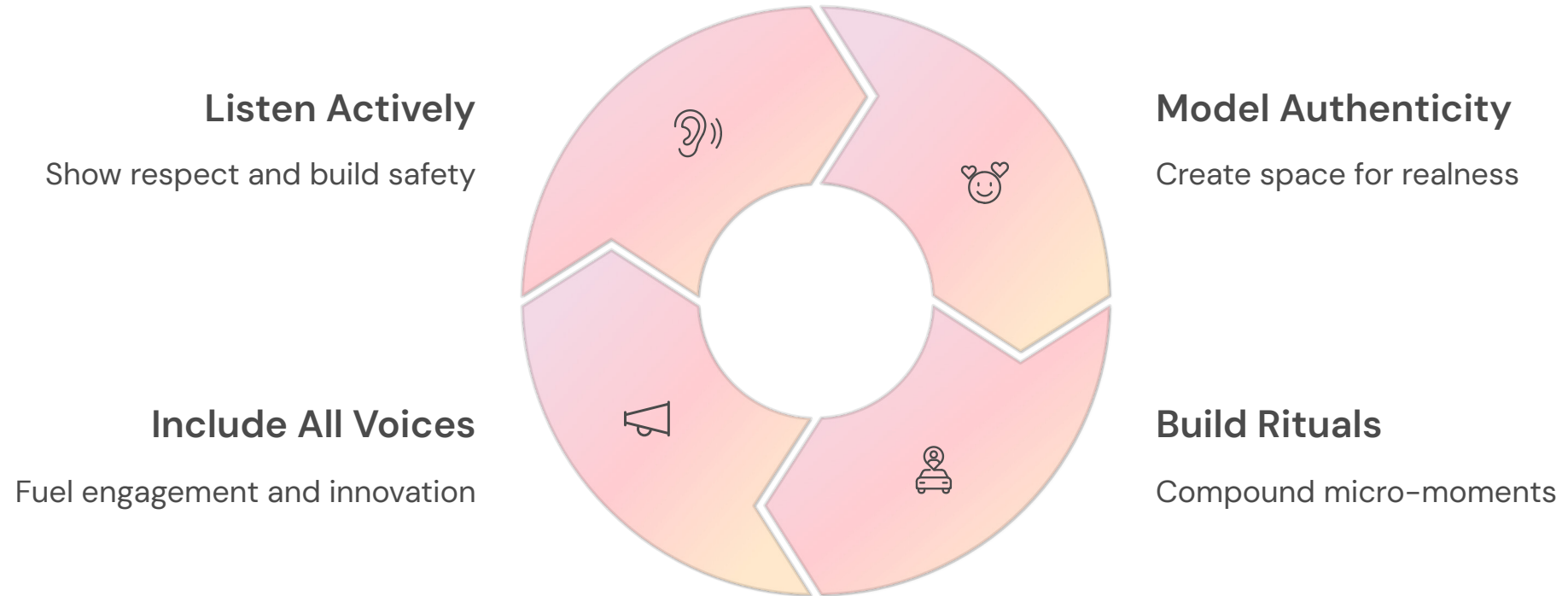
Whose perspective can I invite in this week?

Connection Check

Use this quick assessment to evaluate your current connection practices and identify areas for growth.

Question	Frequency
Do I check in on my team's well-being weekly?	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Consistently
Do I know what helps each team member feel appreciated?	☐ No ☐ Somewhat ☐ Yes
Do I address conflict quickly and respectfully?	☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Consistently

The Power of Consistent Connection



Connection grows when people feel seen, supported, and safe to be themselves. Start small, stay consistent, and model the connection you want to see.

Your Connection Action Plan

Take a moment to commit to specific actions that will strengthen connection on your team.

1

This Week

Which listening practice will I implement in my next check-in?

2

This Month

What vulnerability or authenticity will I model with my team?

3

This Quarter

Which connection ritual will become a regular part of our team culture?

Learn More

This guide is aligned with the U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being. For additional resources, tools, and support in building mentally fit workplaces, visit:

Visit Mentally Fit Workplaces

Connection grows when people feel seen, supported, and safe to be themselves. Start small, stay consistent, and model the connection you want to see.